

That is why Republicans at the Education and Labor Committee have been fighting so hard to keep schools open. We know the stakes are high.

This pandemic has made it abundantly clear that teachers' unions, as well as the education establishment, have too much power. Neither union bosses nor bureaucrats in Washington should be able to keep our children from the classroom. Access to education is an important right in this country, one that teachers' unions are belittling with their outrageous demands.

What has the outsized influence of teachers' unions produced? Less school choice, falling education standards, explicit material in school libraries, critical race theory-inspired curriculum, and years of learning loss.

Teachers' unions have become far less about protecting teachers or students and far more about promoting a left-wing political agenda. This was made clear when the teachers' unions in several major cities joined forces with the Democratic Socialists of America to demand an eviction moratorium and an end to voucher programs as conditions for reopening schools.

The longer we let these union bosses take advantage of this pandemic, the worse off our students will be. Students should no longer take a back seat to politics or special interests.

It is time to stop catering to teachers' unions and to start serving the needs of students.

RECOGNIZING EDUCATORS AND SCHOOL STAFF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LEVIN of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the resilient, dedicated, and understandably exhausted, yet unflagging, educators and school staff across the Nation.

I have spent my career advocating for an equitable education system, and I am a proud dad of four children who are products of Michigan public schools. In fact, my daughter Molly is currently a high school junior who is set to graduate next year. I can hardly believe it.

That is why I have been especially disheartened when I meet regularly with educators and superintendents in Macomb and Oakland Counties and hear stories of how these frontline workers navigate from one crisis to another, seemingly without end. From multiple COVID-19 waves and politicization of commonsense public health measures, like masking and vaccines, to mass shootings, like the Oxford High School tragedy in my home county of Oakland County that we are still mourning, and startling learning loss and social delays.

Mr. Speaker, our educators, school staff, and administrators are not catching a break. They are working tirelessly and meeting daily, even over hol-

iday breaks, to make sure they can provide the best learning environment for our students. Across the board, they reported trouble finding teachers, finding bus drivers, finding kitchen staff and everything in between.

Our students are returning to the classroom with immense needs in the midst of a teacher and substitute shortage. All manner of staff and administrators, including even superintendents themselves, are stepping up and entering the classroom as substitutes.

One thing is very clear: We need a societal shift to address the issues around staffing, attendance, learning loss, and the social and mental health needs of our students. As the omicron variant continues to surge, we must prioritize education and consider it a sacred public good instead of an industry, and value our educators and school staff by providing living wages, safe work environments, and ending the attacks on educators and their unions.

The pandemic has exposed long-simmering problems, as crises are wont to do. It is a time for a fundamental reset; time for us to realize that, while markets do a great job of distributing goods and services across the society, there are a few social goods that should not be determined by market forces but, rather, lifted up above them as a way to protect our democracy and make the healthy functioning of markets possible in the first place.

One is public safety. Another is access to quality healthcare for every person. A third is an excellent public education for every child, from preschool to community college.

We cannot continue to put our educators through the wringer. Longtime professionals in my district tell me they are hearing from new teachers who say they won't last a couple of years, much less decades.

My response was this: We must restore the education profession; the dignity of the education profession; the worth and the standing of the education profession, no matter how difficult it is. We must train teachers and prepare them for success, offer them appropriate pay and benefits, and support them, not only in the classroom, but in our society with the dignity and respect they deserve.

As a member of the House Education and Labor Committee, I urge my colleagues to join me in continuing the fight for robust investments and just policies to make sure our country, our economy, and our education system work for every American, not just the wealthy few.

THE DRUG CRISIS IS DECIMATING COMMUNITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. JOYCE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the drug cri-

sis that is decimating communities and destroying families.

Earlier this month, the CDC released data showing that fentanyl overdoses are now the number one killer of Americans ages 18 to 45: number one killer. This data is tragic. No family should have to deal with the sudden loss of a loved one.

Fentanyl is often ingested unknowingly, and a dose smaller than the size of a penny can be lethal.

In 2021, President Biden swung open the doors to our southern border, and the impact of that continues to be negative. That decision invited drug traffickers into our country. Last year, Border Patrol agents seized enough fentanyl to kill every man, woman and child in my home State of Pennsylvania.

We cannot solve this crisis while our borders remain open. We cannot solve this crisis while the Biden administration fails to act.

This deadly drug will continue to pour into our country if we fail to build the wall. It will continue to pour into our country if we do not get the border agents the support and the tools that they need.

This issue is far too important to continue to ignore. Our communities continue to suffer. Congress should act now to make fentanyl analogs a schedule one narcotic.

The Biden administration must secure our southern border. Our communities, they are counting on us to act. We can no longer continue to let them down.

SCHOOLS NEED CRITICAL INVESTMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GARCIA) for 5 minutes.

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to the critical investments we are making in our schools. Schools are the pillars of our communities. They are the places where our children learn and grow every day. Making sure that these spaces are safe for our Nation's children is one of our most important responsibilities.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, many of these facilities are not up to the task. School boards have been sounding the alarm for years about lead pipes, poor air quality, and now COVID-19 issues hurting our children's education. And for too long, help has not come.

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But this month, during School Board Recognition Month, I am proud to be able to tell schools in my district and around the country that help is on the way.

Thanks to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, passed by this Chamber, we are bringing billions of dollars to make safe, healthy schools for our kids. That means billions of dollars to remove dangerous lead pipes